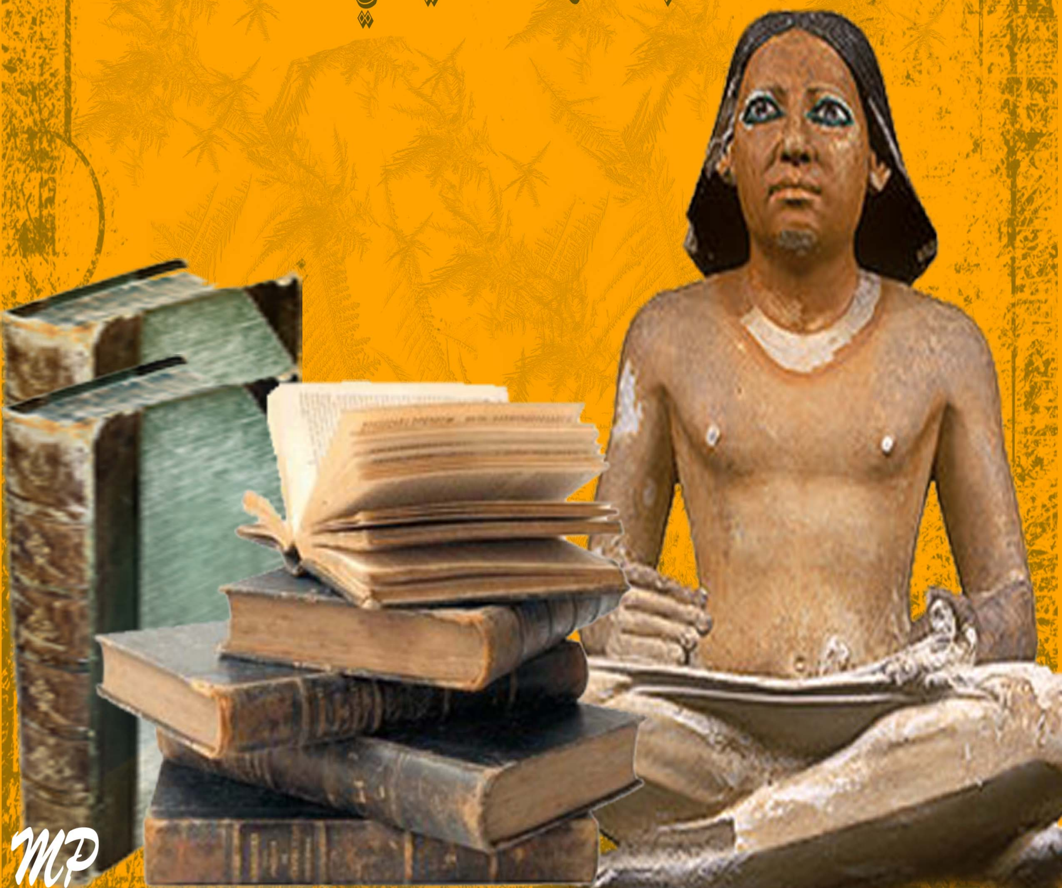

Street in Cairo.
World's Columbian Exposition
C. Graham
The Winters Art Litho Co. Chicago, Ills.

مصر في عيون المرشد السياحي

مكتبة المرشد السياحي الضخمة



THE "CAIRO STREET."

MIDWAY PLAISANCE.



The all-pervading charm which everywhere surrounds the name of Egypt may be traced back to the days of our childhood, to the time when we first heard the story of Moses and of Pharaoh's daughter, of Joseph and his brethren, and the flight of the Holy Family into Egypt. It is the charm which the teaching of Biblical history has impressed upon our minds when most capable of reception, and the beauty of the impressions have made us loth to destroy them. Hence, in all that pertains to Egypt, we have more than a passing interest. Indeed there has been a hope in the hearts of all of us that some day we might be able to visit this land of our fondest dreams, but time and money have been a chasm too broad to be bridged by many, and to most Americans it has been a case of deferred hope and a sad heart. Is it not pleasant to know that, in a measure, this delightful dream is to be realized?

At Paris, in 1889, the *Rue du Caire* was pronounced a great success, though little was then attempted, but it was a suggestion to some bright minds in Chicago, and capital was interested to an amount sufficient to build at the Exposition of 1893, the Cairo Street—not the exact reproduction of any one street in Cairo, but a composite structure which combines the most beautiful architectural features of Cairo. To secure this end, the aid of the Egyptian Government was invoked, and, after due consideration, the Khedive gave permission to his governmental architect, Max Herz, to pre-

pare designs and plans. Later, Mr. Herz was permitted to visit America to superintend the construction of the Cairo Street in person. As a result, there now stands in the center of the Midway Plaisance, under the shadow of the Ferris Wheel, the brightest gem of the Columbian Exposition. A glorious achievement in its entirety, a matchless triumph in detail. It is a restored Cairo, in the days of its unimpaired splendor. Its mosque and fountain are transcendantly beautiful; the balconies, which everywhere o'erhang the street, are veritable gems, ornamented as they are with antique Meshrebieh, much of it seasoned with the age of centuries. Beautifu as it is, the architecture alone would be but a poor reflex of that of Cairo said to be the liveliest and most picturesque city in the world, and so Mr. George Pangalo, or Cairo, has brought from Egypt a throng of natives who wil people this miniature city. This population is thoroughly representative and the street fairly swarms with Egyptians, Arabs, Nubians and Soudanese.

To reach Cairo, enter the Plaisance at the Woman's Building; stroll down the broad avenue if you are fond of walking and have time, otherwise use a rolling chair, or, better still, enter a car of the sliding railway and be instantaneously transported to the very gate of the City. Your first glance may be a disappointment. Like all Mohammedan towns, its exterior is most uninviting. Plastered walls, irregular buildings, here and there pierced with grated openings, present a forbidding aspect, which is only relieved by the stately minaret, which rises from the center of this mass. Enter the eastern portal, which is low and broad, and you realize your dream of the Orient. You forget the magnitude of





STREET LOOKING EAST.



the buildings in Jackson Park and the "sky scrapers" of Chicago, and enter into the strange life which is before you. There is nothing to remind you of the 19th century, save the costumes of the visitors who are there, like yourself, and whom you might wish elsewhere, that you might enjoy your dream. Passing the shops at the entrance, step into the Cafe and seat yourself. As you sip your Mocha and enjoy its fragrance, glance down the street, for through the arches of this Cafe may be had its best view. Directly in front of you stands the Mosque, which is a counterpart of that of the Sultan Kait Bay, in all save the minaret, that being a reproduction in its entirety of the minaret of the Mosque of Abou Bake Mazhar, the most beautiful in all Cairo. Later, when you visit the Mosque, notice the massive doors and their ornamentation. The metal ornaments are rich in their tracery, and still more gorgeous in the sublime coloring of centuries of corrosion. In the sanctuary, which is truth itself in its fidelity to its model, gaze with wonder upon the decorations, the draperies and the pendant lamps, all rich in the colors which were grand when new, but now glorified by the refining influences of nature. If you are curious about the worship of the Mohammedan, step into the visitor's gallery, when the Muezzin calls the faithful to prayer, and see them at their devotions.

Across the street is the restored dwelling of a rich Arab of the 17th century, Gamal El Din El Yahbi. The facade is more elaborate than is usual in the street. Huge balconies extend from the upper stories, and Meshrebieh, rich with the color of age, suggests a luxurious interior. Enter the handsome portal, and as the doors swing open examine the beauty of



OKALA.

MOSQUE.

their traceries so exquisitely inlaid with ivory. Ascend to the living apartments of this house and wonder at the luxurious and refined life the owner must have led. The costly decorations, gilded ceilings, mosaics, elaborate draperies, beautiful rugs, all proclaim rich ease and refined luxury.

Further down the street, well removed from the houses on either side, stands a marble pavilion the walls of the lower story pierced with arched windows, while above are light arcades, covered with Arabesques and crowned with o'er-spreading balconies. The ground floor is, in Cairo, used as a drinking fountain, and the upper for a Kuttab or Mosque school. Here the pavilion will be put to the same purpose, some of the time, but visitors will be permitted to use the upper room as an observatory during the greater portion of the season. In Cairo the Sebil is known as that of Abderrah an Khat Hoadi. It is the finest example of that type of architecture in Cairo. To the right of the Sebil is located the entrance to the theatre, where are given the wild, weird performances peculiar to the race. In the selection of performers Mr. Pangalo was careful only to secure the most expert. The sword dancers, candle dancers, those who perform the *Dans du Ventre*, are the bright particular stars of the Egyptian firmanent, while the musicians who accompany them are as weird and picturesque as the dancers themselves. The theatre is not dependent, however, upon the performers for interest, for its decorations are well worthy of a visit.

To the left of the Sebil, is located the Okala. The handsomest portal in the street gives you entrance to the interior where a scene of indescribable beauty awaits. A quadrangular Court, upon all sides of which rise pointed arches one above the other, again surrounded by





HOUSE OF GAMAL EL DIN EL YAHBI.



Types of Cairo.

galleries supported on groined arches, while above, the blue sky is made oriental by the contrast. Here busy merchants ply their trade, the colors of their garb and wares being a part of its decoration. Beautiful as it is by day, the scene at night surpasses it. The sky is then dotted with stars and quaint Egyptian lamps in myriad tints give lustre to the mysterious glow. If these are special features of the street, do not think that here they end. From your present point of view, the houses all have interest. They resemble one another, yet are different in color and effect. The stone brackets which jut out and hold up the walls of the upper stories are all true reproductions of some good Arabic type. The upper stories furnish the architectural beauties of the street, while as far as the eye can see, the lower floors are occupied by shops, not the shops of Europe, but the type of Cairo, rectangular niches cut in the walls, in which the merchant sits surrounded by his wares. To visit all of these (there are sixty-one in the street), will be one continual journey of delight, for here you will find all that the great bazars of Cairo can boast. Every quarter of the Nile country contributes to the great variety, and as you visit one shop after another, you will find not only the ivories, jewelry, potteries, brass work, embroideries, etc.,



which you expect, but as well Soudanese arms and draperies, gold and silver coins of ancient Egyptian dynasties, genuine mummies, beetles, national costumes of Egypt, toilet articles, Lotus soap, and myriads of household articles, which must appeal to modern decorative instincts. In your journey about the street you will also find the artisans at work, the manufacturers of slippers, the silk weavers at their looms, the siwan (tent) makers and embroiderers, seal



THEATRE.



engravers, silversmiths making the famous filigree work of the Soudan, goulahs (jars) shaped and decorated by native workmen, candy makers, manufacturers of musical instruments engravers, wood and ebony carvers, decorators, etc., all ɔusy at their peculiar industries. Look at the barber! his every look and manner of operation so different. The merchant will be found as interesting as his wares, and go not to him dreaming that he knows not your language. He has been dealing with English men and women all his life. But Cairo would not be complete without the donkey. You were not in the street a moment before you heard the donkey boy crying the virtues of his beast in unmistakable English. He is a character, this donkey boy (or man as the case may be), although he is never called other than boy. His calling is hereditary. The son following in the footsteps of the father, generation after generation.

Turn where you will, you are not likely to escape the importunate street vender, or the donkey boy. The driver of the stately camel may seek your custom, but it will be with a dignity akin to the "ship of the desert," now so gaily bedecked.

But if this city is attractive in its every day life, what shall be said of it when it puts on its holiday garb. Go into the street in the morning and see the gayety of the wedding procession which the artist has faithfully depicted; though this is one of the festivals which never identically repeats itself. The populace puts on its best attire and joy reigns supreme. The wrestler, the musician, the torch bearer, camels, priests and women make up an escort for the bride, while the crowd of sight seers help swell the chord of enthusiasm. Then





WEDDING PROCESSION.



there is the ceremony of the "Moulid" or birthday festival, where joy and pleasure are indulged in to the fullest extent. The street is filled for a time with tents of elaborate description, and conjurers, astrologers, necromancers, snake charmers and dancers perform their most marvelous feats. Every variety of life is here represented, and you will find it sufficiently versatile to create an unimpaired interest. It is an object lesson of oriental life of great educational importance. For a moment leave the Arabian or modern Egyptian to his pleasures and step into the realm of ancient Egypt, as portrayed in the ancient Temple of Luxor, now completely restored. This is an exact reproduction, of a temple built by Amenoph III, 1550 B. C., and is the only one ever restored. On the outer walls are sculptured battle scenes as well as those representing the worshipping of the divinities. The two obelisks are exact reproductions of the original obelisks. They are seventy-five feet high and five feet square at the base. The obelisk to the right of the entrance has sculptured on it in hieroglyphics a dedication to the World's Columbian Exposition.

Entering this temple the visitor's attention will be attracted by obelisks, statues and sphinxes, a gateway flanked by pyramidal towers and hieroglyphic inscriptions copied from the ancient monuments. Amenoph III, eighteenth dynasty, 1550 B. C.; Rameses II, nineteenth dynasty, 1400 B. C. and Nectanebo II, thirtieth dynasty, 345 B. C., are the heroes of the historical scenes. Amon-Ra, Maut and Khons are in the shrine as the trinity of Thebes. The judgment of the deacon with the fate of the justified and the condemned, the death and resurrection of the Son of God are illustrated.

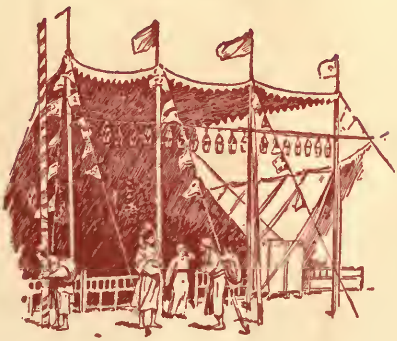


Here is also a colossal statue of Thi and a sarcophagus of the Sacred Bull of the later Ptolemic period. This Temple is a perfect storehouse of Ancient Egyptiana.

Just north of the Temple the Soudanese contingent has pitched its siwans, and there will the strange people from the Soudan and from Nubia repeat their daily life as at home. The Soudanese have traveled to some extent but these Nubians are the first to leave the borders of Egypt. Their peculiarities will prove interesting.

This little book is written simply as a suggestion. To describe the beauties, the quaintness or the picturesqueness of the Cairo Street would be impossible in a volume so small. Only a journey there will satisfy an interest once excited. Visit it when basking in the heat of the midday sun, or bathed in the glowing colors of departing day, it is alike beautiful. Go when the cold grey moonlight illumines it, when the mysterious gloom of night hangs upon it and its grandeur will appeal to every fiber of your being. It is a marvellous creation, artistic in conception, truthful in the interpretation of its beautiful models, a revelation in the perfection of its accomplishment. When the Columbian Exposition shall have become a thing of the past and its memories hazy with the flight of time, if there shall be one spot which shall remain brighter than all the rest, that one will be its beautiful Cairo Street, in the Midway Plaisance.

W. J. H.




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